

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

5 1. A method for managing a streaming media service, said method comprising:

 receiving a request for a streaming media service from a client, said streaming media service comprising a media service component;

 selecting a service location manager to which to provide said request from
10 a plurality of service location managers;

 selecting a service provider to which to assign said media service component from a plurality of service providers of a network;

 informing said service provider of said assignment to perform said media service component, causing said service provider to prepare to perform said
15 streaming media service on streaming media;

 using information to determine whether to initiate a handoff of said streaming media service from said service provider to another service provider;
 and

 if it is determined to initiate said handoff, initiating said handoff.

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 2. The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein said information comprises information received from said service providers and information associated with location and priority of service providers.

3. The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein said information comprises information received from any client device that is involved in said streaming media service.

5 4. The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein said information comprises information associated with network conditions.

5. The method as described in Claim 1, wherein said selecting said service location manager comprises:

10 maintaining a record comprising identifying information of a service location manager among said plurality of service location managers; and selecting said service location manager according to said record.

15 6. The method as described in Claim 1, wherein said selecting said service location manager comprises:

maintaining a record comprising a prioritized list of a set of available service location managers among said plurality of service location managers; and selecting said service location manager according to the order of priority of said list of said record.

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7. The method as described in Claim 1, wherein said selecting said service location manager comprises:

maintaining a record comprising the processing load of each of a set of available service location managers among said plurality of service location managers; and

5 selecting said service location manager from said record having minimum processing load.

8. The method as described in Claim 1, further comprising:
notifying a second service location manager among said plurality of service location managers of the assignment of said media service component.

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9. The method as described in Claim 8, wherein said notifying performed by said service provider or said service location manager.

10. The method as described in Claim 8, wherein said second service
15 location manager is a backup service location manager to said service location manager.

11. The method as described in Claim 1, further comprising:
maintaining a record comprising identifying information of a set of service
20 location managers among said plurality of service location managers; and
notifying said service location managers according to said record of said assignment to perform said media service component.

12. The method as described in Claim 1, further comprising:

receiving resource availability information from said plurality of service providers, wherein said information is ascertained from ongoing resource measurements; and

5 said selecting said service provider based on said resource availability information.

13. The method as described in Claim 12, wherein said resource availability information received is from a group that includes poll-based and push-based.

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14. The method as described in Claim 1, further comprising:
periodically polling service providers if said resource availability information is not received in a predetermined period of time.

15 15. The method as described in Claim 1, wherein said selecting said service provider based on static service provider information and static network information.

20 16. The method as described in Claim 15, wherein said static service provider information and network information consists of one or more of the following: information concerning computational and memory resources, connectivity and expected bandwidth and latency between servers, client and content addresses, session dispatch history, and network proximity.

17. The method as described in Claim 1, wherein said selecting said service provider based on using an estimate of resources associated with performing said service.

5 18. A computer-readable medium comprising computer-executable instructions stored therein for implementing a method for managing a streaming media service, said method comprising:

receiving a request for a streaming media service from a client, said streaming media service comprising a media service component;

10 selecting a service provider to which to assign said media service component from a plurality of service providers of a network;

informing said service provider of said assignment to perform said media service component, causing said service provider to prepare to perform said streaming media service on streaming media; and

15 using information to determine whether to initiate a handoff of said streaming media service from said service provider to another service provider.

19. The computer-readable medium of Claim 18, wherein said information comprises information received from said plurality of service
20 providers and information associated with location and priority of service providers.

20. The computer-readable medium of Claim 18, wherein said information comprises information received from any client device that is
25 involved in said streaming media service.

21. The computer-readable medium of Claim 18, wherein said information comprises information associated with network conditions.

5 22. The computer-readable medium of Claim 18, wherein said method further comprising:

notifying a service location manager among a plurality of service location managers of the assignment of said media service component.

10 23. The computer-readable medium of Claim 22, wherein said notifying performed by said service provider or a second service location manager.

24. The computer-readable medium of Claim 18, wherein said method further comprising:

15 receiving resource availability information from said plurality of service providers, wherein said information is ascertained from ongoing resource measurements; and

said selecting said service provider based on said resource availability information.

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25. The computer-readable medium of Claim 24, wherein said resource availability information received is from a group that includes poll-based information and push-based information.

26. A system for providing streaming content to a client device, said system comprising:

a plurality of service location managers, each service location manager capable of managing a handoff of said streaming content based on information
5 received;

a plurality of service providers, each service provider capable of performing a service on an item of streaming content; and

a portal providing a first point of contact for said client device, said portal for receiving from said client device a request for said service on an item of
10 streaming content, said portal for selecting a service location manager to which to provide said request from said plurality of service location managers, said service location manager for receiving said request from said portal and for selecting a service provider from said plurality of service providers and informing said service provider of said assignment to perform said service.

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27. The system of Claim 26, wherein said information includes information received from said service providers.

28. The system of Claim 26, wherein said information includes
20 information received from said client device.

29. The system of Claim 26, wherein said information includes information associated with network conditions.

30. The system of Claim 26, wherein said portal maintains a record comprising identifying information for said service location manager of said plurality of service location managers and selects said service location manager according to said record.

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31. The system of Claim 26, wherein said service provider notifies a second service location manager among said plurality of service location managers of said assignment of said service.

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32. The system of Claim 26, wherein said portal determines if a first service location manager of said plurality of service location managers is non-responsive.

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33. The system of Claim 32, wherein said portal activates a second service location manager of said plurality of service location managers to perform the operation of said first service location manager, provided said portal determines said first service location manager is non-responsive.

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34. The system of Claim 26, wherein said service provider is supervised by more than one service location manager of said plurality of service location managers.

35. The system of Claim 26, wherein said service provider is supervised by a first service location manager, said first service location

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manager transfers supervision of said service provider to a second service location manager.